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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

19. (currently amended) A method of accessing communication data relevant to a target entity identified by a number string, said method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

[[a) -]] storing in the domain name system (DNS) of the Internet records each associated with a corresponding domain name and holding an URI for locating communications data associated with the domain name, each said domain name being related to a respective number string from which it can be derived by a process including parsing at least a substantial portion of the number string into at least a part of said domain name;

[[b) -]] applying said process to the said number string identifying the target entity whereby to form the related domain name;

[[c) -]] supplying the domain name formed ~~in step (b)~~ to the DNS to retrieve the URI held in the corresponding [[said]] record; and

[[d) -]] using the URI retrieved ~~in step (c)~~ to access said communication data.

20. (currently amended) A method according to claim 19, wherein the URI held in at least one said records is an URL including an access scheme and host address.

21. (previously presented) A method according to claim 20, wherein said host address is a domain name.

22. (previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein each said number string is in telephone-number form.

23. (previously presented) A method according to claim 19, wherein the communications data is a communications endpoint address for the target entity.
24. (previously presented) A method of accessing a target entity over a telephone network, in which communications data in the form of a telephone number for the target entity is accessed according to the method of claim 19, this telephone number then being used to call the target entity over the telephone network.
25. (currently amended) A method according to claim 19, wherein the URI held in at least one said records is the URI for said communications data itself.
26. (currently amended) A method according to claim 19, wherein the URI held in at least one said records is of functionality that has access to multiple items of communications data, ~~step (d) and~~ wherein using the URI retrieved to access said communication data involves ~~involving~~ using the URI to access said functionality and supply it with an indicator of the desired item of communications data, this data then being returned by the functionality.
27. (previously presented) A method according to claim 26, wherein the indicator is incorporated into said URI and supplied in this form to said functionality.
28. (previously presented) A method according to claim 26, wherein the indicator is supplied to said functionality as a separate element to said URI.
29. (currently amended) A method according to claim 26, wherein the URI held in at least one said records is an URL including an access scheme and host address for accessing said functionality.

30. (previously presented) A method according to claim 26, wherein each said number string is in telephone-number form.

31. (previously presented) A method according to claim 26, wherein the communications data is a communications endpoint address for the target entity.

32. (previously presented) A method of accessing a target entity over a telephone network, in which communications data in the form of a telephone number for the target entity is accessed according to the method of claim 25, this telephone number then being used to call the target entity over the telephone network.

33. (currently amended) A method of accessing communication data relevant to a target entity identified by a number string, said method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

[[a) -]] storing in the domain name system (DNS) of the Internet records each associated with a corresponding domain name and holding an at least part-formed URL, including access scheme and host name, of an item of communications data, each said domain name being related to a respective number string from which it can be derived by a process including parsing at least a substantial portion of the number string into at least a part of said domain name;

[[b) -]] applying said process to the said number string identifying the target entity whereby to form the related domain name; ~~[[and]]~~

[[c) -]] supplying the domain name formed ~~in step (b)~~ to the DNS to retrieve the at least part-formed URL held in the corresponding ~~[[said]]~~ record; and

[[d) -]] using the at least part-formed URL retrieved ~~in step (c)~~ to access said communication data.

34. (currently amended) A method according to claim 33, wherein the URL retrieved ~~in step (c)~~ is

only part-formed and ~~step (d)~~ using the at least part-formed URL retrieved to access said communication data involves completing the URL by adding a path element serving to distinguish the desired item of communication data from other items held on the same host.

35. (previously presented) A method according to claim 33, wherein each said number string is in telephone-number form.

36. (previously presented) A method according to claim 33, wherein the communications data is a communications endpoint address for the target entity.

37. (previously presented) A method of accessing a target entity over a telephone network, in which communications data in the form of a telephone number for the target entity is accessed according to the method of claim 33, this telephone number then being used to call the target entity over the telephone network.

38. (currently amended) A method of discovering communications endpoint address data for contacting a target entity identified by a number string, said method comprising ~~the steps of:~~

[[a) -]] storing in the domain name system (DNS) of the Internet records each associated with a corresponding domain name and holding an URL of a resource that has access to multiple items of communications endpoint address data, each said domain name being related to a respective number string from which it can be derived by a process including parsing at least a substantial portion of the number string into at least a part of said domain name, the number strings being in telephone-number form;

[[b) -]] applying said process to the said number string identifying the target entity whereby to form the related domain name; [[and]]

[[c) -]] supplying the domain name formed in step (b) to the DNS to retrieve the URL held

in the corresponding [[said]] record; and

[[(d) -]] using the URL to access the corresponding said resource and supply it with an indicator of the desired item of communications endpoint address data, this data then being returned by the resource.

39. (currently amended) A method of accessing communication data relevant to a target entity identified by a number string, said method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

[[(a) -]] storing in a DNS-type database system, records each associated with a corresponding domain name and holding an URI for locating communications data associated with the domain name, each said domain name being related to a respective number string from which it can be derived by a process including parsing at least a substantial portion of the number string into at least a part of said domain name;

[[(b) -]] applying said process to the said number string identifying the target entity whereby to form the related domain name; [[and]]

[[(c) -]] supplying the domain name formed ~~in step (b)~~ to the DNS-type database system to retrieve the URI held in the corresponding [[said]] record; and

[[(d) -]] using the URI retrieved ~~in step (c)~~ to access said communication data.

40. (currently amended) A method according to claim 39, wherein the URI held in at least one said records is an URL including an access scheme and host address for accessing said communications data.

41. (previously presented) A method according to claim 39, wherein each said number string is in telephone-number form.

42. (previously presented) A method according to claim 39, wherein the communications data is a communications endpoint address for the target entity.

43. (currently amended) A method according to claim 39, wherein the URI held in at least one said record is of functionality that has access to multiple items of communications data, ~~step (d) and~~ wherein using the URI retrieved to access said communication data involves ~~involving~~ using the URI to access said functionality and supply it with an indicator of the desired item of communications data which is then returned by the functionality.

44. (currently amended) A method of accessing communications data for contacting a target entity, said method comprising ~~the steps of:~~

[[a) -]] forming, from a number string identifying the target entity, a domain name by a process including parsing at least a substantial portion of the number string into at least a part of said domain name;

[[b) -]] supplying the domain name formed ~~in step (a)~~ to the domain name system of the Internet and receiving back from the domain name system a resource record including an URI for locating communications data associated with the domain name; and

[[c) -]] using the URI received back ~~in step (b)~~ to access said communication data.

45. (currently amended) A method according to claim 44, wherein the URI received back ~~in step (b)~~ is an URL including an access scheme and host address for accessing said communications data.

46. (previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein said number string is a telephone number.

47. (previously presented) A method according to claim 44, wherein the communications data is a

communications endpoint address for the target entity.

48. (previously presented) A method of accessing a target entity over a telephone network, in which communications data in the form of a telephone number for the target entity is accessed according to the method of claim 44, this telephone number then being used to call the target entity over the telephone network.

49. (currently amended) A method according to claim 44, wherein the URI received back ~~in step (b)~~ is the URI of said communications data itself.

50. (currently amended) A method according to claim 44, wherein the URI received back ~~in step (b)~~ is of functionality that has access to multiple items of communications data, ~~step (c) and~~ wherein using the URI received back to access said communication data involves ~~involving~~ using the URI to access said functionality and supply it with an indicator of the desired item of communications data which is then returned by the functionality.

51. (previously presented) A method according to claim 50, wherein the indicator is incorporated into said URI and supplied in this form to said functionality.

52. (previously presented) A method according to claim 50, wherein the indicator is supplied to said functionality as a separate element to said URI.

53. (currently amended) A method according to claim 50, wherein the URI received back ~~in step (b)~~ is an URL including an access scheme and host address for accessing said functionality.

54. (previously presented) A method according to claim 50, wherein said number string is a

telephone number.

55. (previously presented) A method according to claim 50, wherein the communications data is a communications endpoint address for the target entity.

56. (previously presented) A method of accessing a target entity over a telephone network, in which communications data in the form of a telephone number for the target entity is accessed according to the method of claim 50, this telephone number then being used to call the target entity over the telephone network.

57. (currently amended) A method of accessing communications data for contacting a target entity, said method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

[[a) -]] forming, from a number string identifying the target entity, a domain name by a process including parsing at least a substantial portion of the number string into at least a part of said domain name;

[[b) -]] supplying the domain name formed ~~in step (a)~~ to the domain name system of the Internet and receiving back from the domain name system a resource record including an at least part-formed URL, including access scheme and host name, of an item of communications data associated with the domain name; and

[[c) -]] using the URL received back ~~in step (b)~~ to access said communication data.

58. (currently amended) A method according to claim 57, wherein the URL received back ~~in step (b)~~ is only part-formed and ~~step (c)~~ wherein using the URI received back to access said communications data involves completing the URL by adding a path element serving to distinguish the desired item of communication data from other items held on the same host.

59. (previously presented) A method according to claim 57, wherein said number string is a telephone number.

60. (previously presented) A method according to claim 57, wherein the communications data is a communications endpoint address for the target entity.

61. (previously presented) A method of accessing a target entity over a telephone network, in which communications data in the form of a telephone number for the target entity is accessed according to the method of claim 57, this telephone number then being used to call the target entity over the telephone network.

62. (currently amended) A method of discovering communications endpoint address data for contacting a target entity, said method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

[[a) -]] forming, from a number string identifying the target entity, a domain name by a process including parsing at least a substantial portion of the number string into at least a part of said domain name;

[[b) -]] supplying the domain name formed ~~in step (a)~~ to the domain name system of the Internet and receiving back from the domain name system a resource record including an URI of a resource that has access to multiple items of communications endpoint address data; and

[[c) -]] using the URI received back ~~in step (b)~~ to access corresponding said resource and supply it with an indicator of the desired item of communications endpoint address data, this data then being returned by the functionality.

63. (currently amended) A method of accessing communications data for contacting a target entity, said method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

[[a) -]] forming, from a number string identifying the target entity, a domain name by a

process including parsing at least a substantial portion of the number string into at least a part of said domain name;

[[(b) -]] supplying the domain name formed ~~in step (a)~~ to a DNS-type database system and receiving back a resource record including an URI for locating communications data associated with the domain name; and

[[(c) -]] using the URI received back ~~in step (b)~~ to access said communications data.

64. (currently amended) A method according to claim 63, wherein the URI received back ~~in step (b)~~ is an URL including an access scheme and host address for accessing said communications data.

65. (previously presented) A method according to claim 63, wherein each said number string is a telephone number.

66. (previously presented) A method according to claim 63, wherein the communications data is a communications endpoint address for the target entity.

67. (currently amended) A method according to claim 63, wherein the URI held in at least one said record is of functionality that has access to multiple items of communications data, ~~step (d) and~~ wherein using the URI received back to access said communications data involves ~~involving~~ using the URI to access said functionality and supply it with an indicator of the desired item of communications data which is then returned by the functionality.

68. (previously presented) A server of the domain name system of the Internet, the server holding at least one resource record that provides a mapping from a domain name to an URI for locating communications data associated with the domain name, at least a substantial portion of the domain name being in the form of a number string that has been parsed into plural domain-name labels.

69. (previously presented) A server according to claim 68, wherein said URI is an URL including an access scheme and host address for accessing said communications data.

70. (previously presented) A method according to claim 68, wherein the communications data is a communications endpoint address for the target entity.

71. (previously presented) A server according to claim 69, wherein said number string is at least a substantial portion of a telephone number.

72. (previously presented) A server according to claim 68, wherein said URI is of functionality that has access to multiple items of communications data.

73. (previously presented) A server of the domain name system of the Internet, the server holding at least one resource record that provides a mapping from a domain name to an at least part-formed URL, including access scheme and host name, of an item of communications data associated with the domain name, at least a substantial portion of the domain name being in the form of a number string that has been parsed into plural domain-name labels.

74. (previously presented) A server according to claim 73, wherein said number string is at least a substantial portion of a telephone number.

75. (previously presented) A server of the domain name system of the Internet, the server holding at least one resource record that provides a mapping from a domain name to an URL of a resource that has access to multiple items of communications data, at least a substantial portion of the domain name being in the form of a number string that has been parsed into plural domain-name labels.

76. (previously presented) A server according to claim 75, wherein said number string is at least a substantial portion of a telephone number.

77. (previously presented) A DNS-type distributed database system holding at least one resource record that provides a mapping from a domain name to an URI for locating communications data associated with the domain name, at least a substantial portion of the domain name being in the form of a number string that has been parsed into plural domain-name labels.

78. (previously presented) A system according to claim 77, wherein said URI is an URL including an access scheme and host address for accessing said communications data.

79. (previously presented) A system according to claim 77, wherein said number string is at least a substantial portion of a telephone number.

80. (previously presented) A system according to claim 77, wherein said URI is of functionality that has access to multiple items of communications data.